

*The one who observes the sanctity of the
Symbols of Allāh, then such things emanate
from the piety of the hearts. (22:32)*

How to Observe the Sanctity of the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn

*by Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat
ḥafīẓahullāh*

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Foreword

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

When performing any worship it is important that one is mindful that the essence and spirit of that action is not lost. The action should not become something customary, or a mere ritual and neither should one treat it as a chore or to relieve a burden. Hence, emphasis is given to ensuring that no action contrary to the spirit of that worship is committed and the upholding of etiquettes is also actively encouraged. Etiquettes are there to enhance and beautify the action, resulting in that action being performed in the best manner and consequently it being honoured with acceptance. A common shortfall found these days even amongst many conscious Muslims, is the lack of carrying out worship whilst ensuring the spirit of worship remains and that it is performed according to its due etiquettes. Therefore, worship either becomes a mere ritual or a routine habit and for many it is just a matter of becoming absolved of one's obligation. For some it is all about numbers and quantities. The well-known principle of quality is better than quantity is found in our Dīn. Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal رحمته الله narrates a ḥadīth of the Messenger ﷺ:

Many of those who fast acquire nothing besides hunger, and many of those who stand (in optional prayer at night) acquire nothing but sleeplessness. (Musnad)

Hajj and 'Umrah are from the obligatory and optional religious actions performed by Muslims. Those who undertake the journey to the blessed lands of the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn are indeed chosen and accepted by Allāh ﷻ. Such a blessing is only through the grace and favour of the Almighty and it deserves the utmost gratitude to Him. These travellers embark on the journey to the sacred lands, spending large amounts of money along with leaving behind loved ones. However, even this huge blessing is ruined by the lack of attention and importance given to its etiquettes and becoming unmindful of upholding the true spirit behind this great act of worship. It seems ironic that we spend so much, monetarily and physically, yet behave in a negligent manner and let alone omitting the etiquettes, we become involved in sins. May Allāh ﷻ guide us and save us.

My beloved teacher and spiritual mentor Shaykh-ul-Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *ḥafīẓahullāh* has been imparting the methodology of Hajj for the past 25 years. Both during its discourse and otherwise, he has imparted many important and valuable advices to those visiting the blessed lands. Together with this, he has authored a number of articles and editorials highlighting many aspects of this invaluable journey. This committed and ongoing effort is the result of his concern and feelings for those undertaking this great spiritual journey. This booklet is a compilation of the heartfelt sentiments of one who has been moved by the negligence of many who travel to the Ḥaramayn. A

compilation to contemplate and practice upon, it comprises three editorials encouraging the reverence and etiquettes of the Ḥaramayn and also highlighting some important errors and inappropriate conduct people have become accustomed to. These editorials are from the monthly editorials published in the well-known Islāmic journal, ‘Riyaḍul Jannah’, which my beloved Shaykh has been penning for many years. They are food for thought, not just for those who travel to the Ḥaramayn, but for every individual who has the slightest love and reverence for the sacred lands. A read of these shall inshā’ allāh kindle a desire to observe all the etiquettes of the Ḥaramayn, ensure the spirit of the journey remains and gains acceptance in the court of Allāh ﷻ.

I humbly appeal for this booklet to be read with an open mind and heart, with an intention to practice upon the advices found herein. I have much conviction in Allāh ﷻ that it will change the outlook of all readers who are sincere in their desire to please Allāh ﷻ, and inshā’ allāh be a means for them to value and truly appreciate their time in the sacred lands of the Ḥaramayn.

May Allāh ﷻ accept the efforts of my beloved Shaykh and grant him a long life of peace and good health and grant us all the ability to appreciate and benefit from him and his works. Āmīn.

(Muftī) Ismail Bhayat

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Reverence and Love for the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Status of Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn

Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah are by far the most important and virtuous places in Islām. They are held in high esteem by every Muslim and demand respect and honour from all. Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah are both located in Al-Ḥijāz. Al-Ḥijāz is a state of the Arabian Peninsula located on the coast of the Red Sea and is known in the Tawrāh as Fārān. Being a mountainous area of rugged and rough terrain with an extreme climate, outwardly it appears to be one of the most uninhabitable places on earth. Yet, it is the mother of all lands and the land blessed by Allāh ﷻ, possessing endless virtues. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said at the liberation of Makkah:

Indeed Allāh had sanctified Makkah the day He created the heavens and the earth; hence it is sanctified by Allāh until the Day of Judgement. (Al-Bukhārī)

In another ḥadīth, we find the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saying:

Dajjāl shall enter every city except Makkah and Al-Madīnah. There is not a single entrance of Makkah and Al-Madīnah but that there are rows of angels guarding it.
(Al-Bukhārī)

The Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn are sanctified by Allāh ﷻ, hence these places demand from us love, honour and respect. In fact, to love, honour and respect these places is a sign of true piety. Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur’ān:

The one who observes the sanctity of the Symbols of Allāh, then such things emanate from the piety of the hearts. (22:32)

In the above verse the “Symbols of Allāh” refer to everything which is associated with Allāh ﷻ, in particular anything to do with the rites of Ḥajj and ‘Umrah. The Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn are without doubt from the Symbols of Allāh ﷻ and their sanctity is a clear indication of taqwā held in the heart.

Love for the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn

Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah are the most beloved places to Allāh ﷻ and our beloved Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ. At the time of Ḥijrah (the migration from Makkah to Al-Madīnah), when leaving Makkah Al-Mukarramah, the Messenger ﷺ turned around and looking back at Makkah Al-Mukarramah said:

By Allāh, you are the best of Allāh's earth, and the most beloved of Allāh's earth to Him. If I were not forced out from you, I would not have left you. (At-Tirmidhī)

We also find the Messenger ﷺ supplicating to Allāh ﷻ with the words:

O Allāh, make Al-Madīnah beloved to us just as Makkah is beloved; or even more... (Al-Bukhārī)

The love of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ for Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn necessitates every Muslim to have love for them and to yearn and desire to visit them. If one truly has love for Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ then every pebble and stone of the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn will become beloved and precious in his eyes. The walls and buildings of the Ḥaramayn, the people and even the animals of the Ḥaramayn shall all become beloved because of their proximity to the Ḥaramayn. This is the sign of 'ishq i.e. true love.

It is a reality that when one has true love for someone or something then the heart will inevitably love everything associated with the beloved. 'Allāmah Al-Ālūsī Al-Baghdādī رحمه الله explaining love says, "Whosoever loves someone, loves the close ones of his beloved. He loves everything connected to his beloved be they: his servants; his home; his property; his locality; the walls of his home;

his dog; and donkey etc. This is the manifestation of ‘ishq and the rule of maḥabbah. Majnūn ‘Āmirī has captured this in his couplet regarding his beloved Laylā. He says:

أَمُرُّ عَلَى الدِّيَارِ دِيَارِ لَيْلَى أَقْبَلُ ذَا الْجِدَارِ وَذَا الْجِدَارِ
وَمَا حُبِّ الدِّيَارِ شَغَفَنَ قَلْبِي وَلَكِنْ حُبِّ مَنْ سَكَنَ الدِّيَارِ

*I pass by the homes of Laylā; I kiss this wall and that wall;
It is not the love of the walls which has engulfed my heart;
it is the love of she who dwells within them...*

The Journey to the Ḥaramayn; a Journey of Love

The traveller to the Ḥaramayn expresses this very love in his journey to the blessed lands. The whole structure of this journey resembles the obsession and enthusiasm of a true ‘āshiq (lover), leaving behind and bidding farewell to everyone and everything to join his beloved.

When the moment arrives to travel to the blessed lands, his manner is that of a true ‘āshiq who can no longer bear his distance from the blessed lands of his beloved Allāh ﷻ, the Ḥaramayn. His condition is such that his heart and mind are calling out to Allāh ﷻ:

ترے فراق میں جینا بشر کا کام نہیں
ہزار شکر کہ اس عمر کو دوام نہیں

*To live in separation from you is not possible for a human;
I am very grateful this life is not eternal.*

This ‘āshiq then leaves his home overwhelmed by love, oblivious of the difficulties and burdens of the journey, as he is to join the gathering of the ‘ushshāq (lovers) at the House of the Beloved.

اجازت ہو تو آکر میں بھی شامل ان میں ہو جاؤں

سنا ہے ترے در پر ہجوم عاشقاں ہو گا

I seek your permission so I may also join them;

I have heard the ‘ushshāq are to gather at your

House soon.

Thereafter, he dons the two cloths of ih̄rām. Without normal clothing, perfume or any other adornment; he is the sight of a pauper. These are no longer important; he is required by His beloved to don the clothing of love. His garments mean nothing; he is entranced by the love and desire to reach the blessed lands. His tongue is moist with the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, reciting on each step his message of love:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ،

إِنِّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

Here I am at Your service, O Allāh, Here I am at Your service. Here I am at Your service, You have no partner, Here I am at Your service. Indeed all praise, favour and kingdom is Yours, You have no partner.

This is the call of the ‘āshiq to his beloved. As he draws ever closer his heartbeat quickens and his desire increases.

When finally he reaches his condition is such that he feels:

جذبِ دل نے آج کوئے یار میں پہنچا دیا
جیتے جی میں گلشنِ جنت میں داخل ہو گیا

*My heartfelt desire has brought me to the
home of my beloved;
I have entered the garden of Jannah alive.*

This is the condition of a true ‘āshiq and the same should be the case of every believer blessed with travelling to the Ḥaramayn; the fire of true love for Allāh ﷻ burning in his heart.

Love Demands Adab (Good Conduct) and Obedience

True love compels a person to honour, respect, act with adab and obedience to the beloved. Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ؒ would often quote the famous saying:

محبت تجھ کو آدابِ محبت خود سکھا دیگی

Love itself will teach you the etiquettes of love.

If one claims to have true love for someone or something, yet fails to honour, respect, act with adab and obey that person, their claim shall be deemed false. The following couplet is attributed to the undisputed Imām of Ḥadīth and Fiqh, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak ؒ:

تَعْصِي الْإِلَٰهَ وَأَنْتَ تُظَاهِرُ حُبَّهُ هَذَا لَعَمْرِي فِي الْفِعَالِ قَبِيحٌ
لَوْ كَانَ حُبُّكَ صَادِقًا لَأَطَعْتَهُ إِنَّ الْمُحِبَّ لِمَنْ يُحِبُّ مُطِيعٌ

You disobey Allāh whilst outwardly displaying His love?

This is indeed a repulsive action;

*If your love was true you would have obeyed Him; The
lover is always obedient to the beloved.*

The famous ṣūfī and shaykh of the third hijrī century, Ruwaym ibn Aḥmad ؒ was asked to define love. He said, “Love is obedience in all situations.”

Therefore, our love for the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn demands that we keep in mind all the etiquettes of the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn and act accordingly. The pinnacle of these etiquettes is to spend time in the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn in total obedience to Allāh ﷻ; fulfilling every compulsory action, refraining from everything unlawful and detested, along with trying our utmost to practice the optional and preferred actions. The slightest disrespect to anything or anyone there should be unthinkable.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us His true love which will lead to love and adab for everything associated with Him, including the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn. Āmīn.

Taken from Riyāḍul Jannah, Volume 24, Issue 7



The Mobile Phone, Photography and the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The issue of photography and video filming, whether live or recorded, is one that holds a difference of opinion amongst the ‘Ulamā. Some view them as permissible whilst others do not. I would like to clarify from the outset that my objective is not to evaluate and make a judgement in favour or against any of the opinions, nor is it the area of my discussion. I am not a Muftī and I prefer that the decisions of such intricate issues, which require much research and knowledge, be left to those who are qualified to discuss them. I also do not regard it correct for the general public to delve into such matters; as this causes nothing but confusion and disunity. It is also not appropriate for the ‘Ulamā to use the general public as a forum to discuss and voice their opinions on such fiqhī matters, rather they should be kept within academic circles, to avoid disunity and chaos. My humble objective here is to merely mention a few simple points which I feel very strongly about and firmly believe that every Muslim should pay attention to and act accordingly.

Ḥaramayn amazes me and hurts me. It was only a few years ago that no one was allowed to take any pictures or videos in or around the Ḥaramayn. This was strictly prohibited and fully enforced by the authorities. However, since this enforcement was relaxed there is now extensive usage of the mobile phone and cameras all around the sacred Masājīd. In my humble opinion, I feel their usage violates the sanctity of these blessed places and they are a means of people moving further away from Allāh ﷻ rather than gaining His proximity. Therefore, it is my earnest appeal to all Muslims, irrespective of whether they hold the opinion of permissibility or impermissibility, that they should refrain from all types of photography and video filming whilst in the Ḥaramayn, and give due consideration to the points mentioned below.

Photography, a Sin

A large number of ‘Ulamā are of the opinion that photography and video filming are impermissible. According to this view, taking photographs of animate objects is a sin. Therefore, one who indulges in photography and video filming will be sinning in the blessed places.

The Mobile Phone and Futility

Even for those who regard photography and video filming as permissible, my plea is to still refrain from such activities whilst in the Ḥaramayn, as it shall not fall short of being

Lā Ya‘nī i.e. futile actions which bring no benefit or harm. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has discouraged the Ummah from Lā Ya‘nī:

It is from the beauty of a person's Islām that he leaves those actions which are of no avail to him. (At-Tirmidhī)

The masājīd, especially the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn, are not places for futile activities; they are the Houses of Allāh ﷻ and places of worship. Therefore, one should refrain from every such action whilst in them.¹

The Ḥaramayn: the Mothers of Masājīd

Masjid Al-Ḥarām and Masjid An-Nabawī both are masājīd; the Houses of Allāh ﷻ. Whilst present in them, we become heedless of their etiquettes and carry out such actions that we would never even imagine doing in our local masjid. Would we ever use the mobile phone, take pictures and videos in our local masjid? Would we tolerate talking on the phone, surfing the internet, playing games and the heart-breaking sound of musical ringtones in our local masjid? If the mobile was to ring in our local masjid, we would become infuriated with the owner, due to his inconsideration of the masjid. However, in the Ḥaramayn, we find ourselves freely using it and talking for lengthy periods of time. Would we carry out such actions in our

¹ Further reading on the importance of safeguarding time and staying away from futile activities can be found in the book published by At-Tazkiyah entitled ‘Valuing the Asset of Time’.

local masjid? The answer is a clear no. Then why should such actions be tolerated, rather perpetrated in the mothers of all masājīd?

The lives of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ and the pious predecessors are a beacon of light for us. Let us view their attitude towards inappropriate actions in the masājīd. Imām Al-Bukhārī ﷺ narrates:

Sā'ib ibn Yazīd ﷺ says: "I was standing in the masjid when suddenly someone threw a pebble at me. I looked and it was 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ. He said: 'Go and bring these two people to me.' I brought them to him. He asked them: 'Who are you two? / Where are you from?' They replied: 'We are from the people of Ṭā'if.' 'Umar ﷺ replied: 'If you were from the dwellers of the city (i.e. Al-Madīnah) I would have (physically) chastised you; you raise your voices in the Masjid of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ?!" (Al-Bukhārī)

This is a classic example of the sanctified environment in the masjid during the time of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ. Their lives practically showed us the purpose of a masjid and how it should be safeguarded.

Hence, when a masjid is to be held in such a high regard, how can we carry out such outrageous actions in the best of masājīd? May Allāh ﷻ grant us the correct understanding. Āmīn.

Inconveniencing Others

Photography and video filming in the Ḥaramayn are a source of inconvenience for others. Many a time one is trying to concentrate on reciting the Qur'ān or performing Ṣalāh, and someone walks past and stands in front to pose for a picture. It is extremely worrying and very disturbing when one is performing ṭawāf or sa'ī trying to fulfil this worship correctly with concentration, when hoards of people rush past taking photos and filming themselves. The scene at the blessed resting place of Nabī ﷺ is of such disrespect that sometimes I fear that the wrath of Allāh ﷻ may fall upon us. It seems to be a craze, a loss of sense and intellect that we enter the court of the beloved of Allāh ﷻ, the best of creation, our master and our beloved Nabī ﷺ and instead of behaving respectfully, we are busy taking photos and videos of it. This is a place of adab (etiquette) and not a place for hysterical and degrading behaviour seen these days. Would we behave in such an inappropriate manner at Buckingham Palace? A poet beautifully says:

چھوڑ کر دیوانہ پن اے دل ذرا ہوشیار ہو
اب دھڑکنا بھی ادب سے یہ ہے کوئے مصطفیٰ ﷺ

*Leave your craziness, O heart, and become sensible;
Even your beating should be respectful, this is the home
of Muṣṭafā ﷺ.*

Ostentation and Falsehood

The action of taking photos and videos of one another is sadly for the sake of showing others. I have seen with my own eyes on numerous occasions people pretending to recite the Qur'ān, simply for the sake of a photo. Many do the same with du'ā and various other postures of worship. These are, without us even realising, actions of riyā (ostentation) and kidhb (falsehood). These pictures are then used to gratify one's pride upon return. Some will immediately send it to people through social media with captions like 'Me praying Qur'ān in Ḥaram Sharīf!' etc. These are not only sinful activities, they are major sins. The Messenger ﷺ said to the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ:

The thing that I fear the most upon you is the lesser shirk." They asked: "What is the lesser shirk O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ?" He ﷺ replied: "Riyā. Allāh ﷻ will say to them [i.e. people with riyā] on the Day of Judgement, when others would be rewarded for their actions: 'Go to the people to whom you were showing your actions and see if you can find any reward with them.' (Aḥmad)

This is such a detrimental sin that it is named the lesser shirk, as all worship should be only to please Allāh ﷻ the Creator, not the creation. If someone was actually worshipping in the Ḥaramayn and suddenly decided to

18 have their photo taken, then this would constitute riyā.

However, if someone was not engaged in any worship and for the sake of a photo or film pretends to worship in order to show others, then such an action is an apparent lie as well as *riyā*. May Allāh ﷻ save us.

Distraction from the Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ

The *masājid* are the Houses of Allāh ﷻ wherein only He is to be remembered.

Once a villager *Ṣaḥābī*, unfamiliar with the etiquettes of *Masjid An-Nabawī*, came and urinated in a corner of the *Masjid*. The *Ṣaḥābāh* ﷺ who were present became enraged but our beloved Nabī ﷺ delicately handled the situation and gave the villager a simple and very clear piece of advice, highlighting the purpose of a *masjid*:

It is not befitting for these masājid that there be any urine or filth. They are only for the remembrance of Allāh, Ṣalāh and the recitation of the Qur'ān. (Muslim)

This *ḥadīth* very simply clarifies the basic function of a *masjid*. It is a place of worship and a place of remembering Allāh ﷻ, wherein one disconnects from everything and connects only to the Almighty Allāh.

Our pious predecessors would not tolerate the least disturbance in their *Ṣalāh* or remembrance of Allah ﷻ, especially in the *masājid*.

Imām Ash-Shāṭbī ﷺ has quoted a story of Imām Mālik ﷺ

in his book Al-I'tisām:

Abū Muṣ‘ab ؓ, the student of Imām Mālik ؓ, said: “Imām ibn Mahdī ؓ came to us i.e. Al-Madīnah. He performed Ṣalāḥ having placed his shawl in front of the row. When the Imām concluded the Ṣalāḥ, the people stared at him and Imām Mālik ؓ, who had also prayed Ṣalāḥ behind the Imām. When Imām Mālik ؓ finished his salām he inquired: ‘Who from the police are present here?’ Two people came to him. He said: ‘Take hold of the owner of the shawl and imprison him.’ They took hold of him to imprison him when it was said that this person is Imām ibn Mahdī ؓ. Imām Mālik ؓ turned towards him and said: ‘Did you not fear Allāh and have Taqwā that you had placed your shawl in front of you on the row causing a distraction to those offering Ṣalāḥ?’”

Look at how cautious the pious predecessors were when it came to revering the masājīd and abstaining from distraction from the remembrance of Allāh ؓ. Our situation is very different, we carry mobile phones, cameras and similar gadgets which without doubt distract us from the remembrance of Allāh ؓ. They are obstacles which prevent us from remembering Allāh ؓ, even in the masājīd. This is evident from scenes such as people checking their phones after every two raka‘āt during tarāwīḥ, or people speaking on their phones or text messaging whilst in the masjid. Our

20 Nabī ؐ was extremely particular about making sure that

his worship was full of concentration of the highest level. The slightest thing which would disturb his concentration would be discarded. Imām Al-Bukhārī ﷺ narrates a ḥadīth wherein Nabī ﷺ was offering Ṣalāh in a piece of clothing which had a pattern on it. His gaze fell upon the pattern during Ṣalāh. Upon completion he ﷺ said:

Take this garment with pattern back to Abū Jahm and bring back the simple Anbajānī garment of his. Indeed, this garment had distracted me in my Ṣalāh just now.
(Al-Bukhārī)

If a little pattern on a garment was a means of distraction in prayer for the best of mankind ﷺ, then who are we to say that the mobile, especially the smartphone, does not distract us from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ? Let us take control of ourselves, pay heed to the importance of remembering Allāh ﷻ and observe the sacredness of the masājīd and refrain from using these items in all masājīd, especially the Ḥaramayn.

Concluding Advices

In conclusion, it is my humble appeal to all Muslims to pay attention to the above with an open mind and to make a firm intention to stay away from using the mobile phone, photography and video filming etc. whilst in the Ḥaramayn. We will lose nothing, rather make great gains. Try to leave these items in your hotel rooms, so even the

thought of looking at the phone does not arise. Of course, if someone has a genuine need then that is a necessity which is excluded from the above discussion. However, for such unforeseen events, try to take a simple phone with you, not a smartphone, and try to text message rather than making a call. If you must call, try to leave the Masjid or at least speak in such a place where you will not be a means of inconvenience to others. This is a plea from the depth of my heart and I wish only good from what has been written. I pray to Allāh ﷻ that He accepts whatever has been written and make it a means for the Muslims to make a change for the betterment of their Hereafter. Amīn.

ہر دردمند دل کو رونا مرا رُلا دے

بے ہوش جو پڑے ہیں شاید انہیں جگا دے

*May my weeping bring tears to the eyes of every
concerned person;*

*Perhaps it may awaken those who are lying
unconscious [i.e. who have become completely
neglectful of Dīn].*

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the correct understanding and the ability to act accordingly. Āmīn.

Taken from Riyāḍul Jannah, Volume 24, Issue 8



Adab of the Ḥaramayn Sharīfayn

Respect for the Sacred Cities

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The opportunity to visit the sacred cities of Makkah Al-Mukarramah and Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah is indeed a great blessing and favour, which Allāh ﷻ bestows upon His chosen servants. The journey is one in which the servant, despite all his shortcomings, has the honour of being the guest of his Master and Creator, Allāh ﷻ. Almost every traveller to these blessed lands entertains the wish of being able to reside in them forever.

However, it is worth pondering over the verdict of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله regarding a Muslim settling in the holy places. He was of the opinion that it is makrūh for the common people to reside in the blessed places, due to the fact that it would lead them to eventually lose the importance and sacredness with which these places should be regarded. Sooner or later it would result in them behaving in a negligent and disrespectful manner.

This is evident in the behaviour of the majority of the visitors who, after initially appreciating the new environment, soon change their attitude. Sad but true. This is the case for many of us when we visit the blessed lands.

Activities which are contrary to the Shari‘ah take place, and the respect that should be observed by every Muslim, be he a visitor or a local resident, vanishes.

The following are just some examples of actions many of us carelessly engage in, and by doing so, violate the rights of the two Ḥarams. They should be avoided at all costs, whether one is visiting with the purpose of performing ‘Umrah or Ḥajj, or whether one resides in these blessed places:

Talking in the Ḥaram

Despite all the emphasis placed on remaining silent whilst in a masjid and being fully aware of the many virtues of engaging in ‘ibādah, we engage in long conversations on themes related to worldly matters. This should be completely avoided. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

There will come a time upon people when they will talk about worldly affairs in the masjid. On such occasions, do not sit with them. Allāh ﷻ does not need such people.
(Al-Bayhaqī)

Using Mobiles in the Ḥaram

The ringing of mobile phones within the mosques, to the extent that they even ring during Ṣalāh, has become obnoxiously common. It is commonly observed that people use their mobile phones whilst reading the Qur’ān, doing ṭawāf and often those engaged in Ṣalāh are disturbed by

people using their phones. We must remember to switch our phones off in these sacred places, or even better, abstain from entering with them in the first place. It is strange how we switch off mobile phones in our local masājid but use them freely in the Ḥaramayn.

Unnecessarily Meeting Friends

The practice of going out of one's way to meet fellow visitors just for the sake of socialising should be avoided, as it amounts to a waste of valuable time. Use every second of your time in doing good. You have your whole life in which to socialise with them when you return.

Eating out in Restaurants

Just for the sake of tasting different types of foods, we sacrifice precious time in which we could be gaining rewards. Some people go as far as missing Ṣalāh in the Ḥaram Sharīf due to eating out.

Committing Sins

Disobedience to Allāh ﷻ should be avoided at all costs. Casting evil glances and backbiting are the most common forms of sinning. We must exert extraordinary efforts to refrain from all sins and make a firm resolution to remain steadfast on this upon our return.

Spending Time Shopping

Rather than remaining in the Sacred Masājid to perform

‘ibādah, we tend to spend an enormous amount of time shopping. In reality, the majority of the items that are sold there are also available back home. Rather than starting to shop as soon as we arrive, we should confine the purchasing of gifts and non-essential items to the last two or three days of our stay in each city, and fix certain hours per day for shopping so that these last days are not totally wasted either. This will help to ensure that we spend as much of our time as possible in ‘ibādah.

Watching Television

The fact that a television set is found in nearly every hotel room does not mean that we should watch it. Moreover, some people engage in watching movies etc. Such actions should be shunned for they bring the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ.

Looking at the Faults of Others

We have a tendency to look at the mistakes and faults of others. We forget that every person around us is either a visitor or resident of the cities of Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ. Is it appropriate to disgrace either the guest of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ or an inhabitant of their cities?

‘Ibādah void of Spirituality

Whether it be ṭawāf, greeting the Prophet ﷺ or other acts of worship, our devotions have all become mere rituals, to the extent that we perform ‘Umrah every year during our

holidays simply because it has become a trend. We need to perform ‘ibādah with a sense of the sacredness of the place and greatness of the Creator with the sole intention of pleasing Him.

‘Virtues of Ḥajj’ by Shaykh-ul-Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﷺ is a recommended read. It will help us rectify our behaviour and reacquaint ourselves with the sacredness of the places we are visiting and the significance of the actions we are carrying out.

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An essential read for all intending pilgrims: How to Perform Ḥajj, 'Umrah, Ziyārah (in English & Gujarati) and Useful Advice for Travellers to the Ḥaramayn by Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat ḥafīẓahullāh.

